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REVIEWS.

Salmon Portland Chase. By ALBERT BUSHNELL HART. (American Statesmen Series.) Boston and New York, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1899. — ix, 465 pp.

Charles Francis Adams. By his son, CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS. (American Statesmen Series.) Boston and New York, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1900. — vii, 426 pp.

Charles Sumner. By MOORFIELD STOREY. (American Statesmen Series.) Boston and New York, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1900. — 466 pp.

If it be a test of a good biography so to present the subject of it that one can form a reasonably clear conception both of his personality and of his relation to his times, it may be said that the author of the life of Chase has justified his undertaking. While that type of readers whose curiosity is satisfied only with the spicy and fanciful gossip of clubs and the small tittle-tattle of drawing-rooms may feel that they have still to wait for "the true Salmon P. Chase," the normal reader will find in what is here set before him a perspicuous and faithful account, written in a spirit of candor, both of the man and of his work. Chase is presented by Professor Hart as "the central figure in three episodes which are of great historic importance — the Western political anti-slavery movement, the financial measures of the Civil War and the process of judicial reconstruction." To the first of these the most space is given, and the last episode comes next in fullness of discussion. Financial measures, except where they fall within the domain of juridical law and judicial reconstruction, are dealt with in two brief chapters entitled "Taxation, Loans and Legal Tenders, 1862-63," and "National Banks and the Gold Question."

It is of the first episode that the author's treatment is not only the most ample, but also, in our opinion, the most happy. In the estimation of the part which the various parties and factions and individuals bore in the Civil War and in the period of Reconstruction there is perhaps no great deficiency in the historical conceptions of the present day; but, in the history of the anti-slavery agitation

before the Civil War, due prominence has not been given to the distinctively political movement which prevailed, especially in the West, and which, being practical in its aims, was not disposed to sacrifice the Constitution and the Union to the object of immediately restricting the limits within which slavery was recognized. The issues involved in this political anti-slavery movement are well set forth, particularly in the chapter on Chase's term in the United States Senate — a term which covered the Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act. In his account of the passage of the latter, the author does full justice to the controversial powers of Douglas, frankly declaring that "Chase was no match in debate for this extraordinary man." But it may tend to mislead the general reader to say, in explanation of Douglas's views on slavery, that he "came from southern Illinois, and inherited the sentiment of its early settlers from the border slave States" (p. 137); although it doubtless is true that he readily imbibed and thoroughly assimilated the feelings of the community of which in early manhood he became a member. In conclusion, it may be stated that Professor Hart has made use of a large mass of manuscript material, the discovery and collection of which may be considered as in itself constituting a contribution to history.

The life of Charles Francis Adams is modestly styled by its author a "sketch"; and it may be so regarded in the sense that it is, as we are told, in part a preliminary study and in part the condensed abstract of a larger and more detailed work already far advanced in preparation. To those, at least, who have had the pleasure of reading Mr. Rhodes's last volume, it is not unknown that Mr. Adams kept a diary; and he also carefully preserved his correspondence, including copies of his own letters. While this rich accumulation will be more freely drawn upon in the larger work that is promised us, it has been used with great skill and judgment in the present biography.

As to the manner in which Mr. Adams discharged his duties in the course of a brief but eventful public career, there is, we believe, no difference of opinion. He was at times called upon to assume heavy responsibilities, but he never failed to rise to the occasion. When he was sent as minister to England, the state of our foreign relations was believed to be critical, and subsequent investigations have shown that this belief was correct. Fortunately, our representative at London, which was a sort of storm centre, both comprehended the situation and knew how to deal with it. Appreciating

the reality and the intensity of the division at home, he did not cherish the delusive fancy that the breach might be healed by provoking a conflict with foreign powers. Hence, he conceived it to be his duty, so far as it could be "honestly" done, to prevent "mutual irritation from coming to a downright quarrel," believing that to adopt any other course would be "like throwing the game into the hands of the enemy." This policy, as his biographer declares, "guided his action at London from the day he arrived to the day he left." It was, however, a most difficult policy, to the success of which a disposition to yield too much would have been as fatal as an inability to concede enough. It required high intelligence, clear perception, nice discrimination, and withal tact and firmness. These qualities Mr. Adams exhibited in rare combination. He fitly closed his public career as one of the arbitrators at Geneva, where he not only rendered services of great importance, but also won, by the uprightness of his conduct, the commendation of both governments.

Of Mr. Adams's personal traits, no special characterization is attempted in the present volume ; but, from what is disclosed of his words and works, it does not seem difficult to form a conception of him as a man. Possessed of a high sense of honor and incapable of prevarication, he had also, as we conceive, a strong sense of propriety, and was strictly observant of forms and conventionalities. Not hopeful, but determined — courageous without aggressiveness, he had too much good sense to be a pessimist ; yet life was to him not a light and joyous matter, but in all respects a serious business, to be performed with dignity and decorum. It is not difficult to believe that he never fully recovered from the unfavorable impression made on him by Lincoln at their first and only official interview, in which the latter, in reply to the usual expressions of obligation, merely declared that the appointment was due to "Governor Seward" and then, stretching out his legs and swinging his arms over his head, dismissed the subject of the London mission by exclaiming to Mr. Seward, "Well, Governor, I've this morning decided that Chicago post-office appointment." The two men were formed and fashioned under conditions so radically different that the instantaneous recognition by each of the other's essential qualities was impossible. In neither case did the manner give the full measure of the man.

Mr. Storey has labored under the disadvantage, to which the authors of the two preceding works were not subject, of writing the

life of a statesman of whom a biography of singular merit already existed. Mr. Sumner, however, naturally occupies a place in the "American Statesmen Series," and Mr. Storey's volume fulfills the end for which it was designed. Its style is forcible and straightforward, and the narrative is clear and animated. The author is in full sympathy with his subject, and it cannot be said that he affects greater impartiality than he exhibits. In some cases a less favorable view of those from whom Mr. Sumner differed would have been compatible with historic fidelity and justice. For example, in referring to the assembling of the Thirty-third Congress, the author states (p. 101) that the purpose of the "pro-slavery party" to use "the whole patronage of the nation" had been "declared by the new Secretary of State in the offensive phrase, 'To the victor belong the spoils.'" It is true that Mr. Marcy, twenty-five years previously, used a phrase similar to this, rather as a taunt than as a declaration of a peculiar policy, in the debate in the Senate on Van Buren's nomination as minister to England; but it is evident that this had nothing to do with the attitude of Mr. Marcy toward slavery at that time, and that it is an entire misconception to treat it as a declaration made in the interest of the "pro-slavery party" by Mr. Marcy, the Secretary of State who rejected the Ostend Manifesto, caused the resignation of Mr. Soulé as minister to Spain and opposed the recognition of Walker's government in Nicaragua.

Again, in discussing the subject of the Alabama claims and the differences between Mr. Fish and Mr. Sumner, Mr. Storey declares that Mr. Sumner "succeeded in having the instructions so drawn as to present the case against England substantially in accordance with his speech upon the Johnson-Clarendon treaty." This is easily tested. Mr. Storey correctly states (p. 365) that Mr. Sumner "claimed that our real grievance lay in the concession to the rebels of ocean belligerency." Mr. Fish, on the other hand, declared that the

necessity and the propriety of the original concession of belligerency by Great Britain at the time it was made have been contested and are not admitted, and that they certainly were "questionable," but that the President "regards that concession as a part of the case only so far as it shows the beginning and the animus of that course of conduct which resulted so disastrously to the United States. It is important in that it foreshadows subsequent events."

This is anything but treating the recognition of belligerency as "our real grievance"; and the difference is of vital importance from the

diplomatic point of view. This may be conceded, and yet it may be maintained that Mr. Sumner's speech powerfully affected the course of the negotiations and the result. Whether that result would have been attained if he had had the management of the negotiations, is a question upon the negative of which much might be said. Nor would such an admission detract from the just meed of his fame. The fact that his name is indelibly associated with certain ideals is sufficient proof of the consistency of his attachment to them, and it is by this standard that he is to be judged. In the ability to appreciate actual conditions, and particularly that most stubborn of all conditions,—human nature,—he was lacking. From the fact that he exhibited, as Mr. Storey says (p. 49), an "inability to realize his adversary's feelings," it is not unreasonable to infer that he was often unconscious of the strength of his own and of the extent to which he was affected by them. While this inference does not appear to be drawn in the volume before us, it is proper to say that Mr. Storey has set forth very fairly the particular traits which suggest it.

J. B. MOORE.

The American Revolution. By SIR GEORGE OTTO TREVELYAN.

Part I, 1766–1776. New York, Longmans, Green & Co., 1899.

— xiii, 434 pp. and a map.

This is a book of the very highest merit. It is history in a literary and human sense, admirably written, dignified but entertaining, full but not crowded, philosophical but not stilted. These are rare qualities, but every trained reader will mark them in the sustained interest which characterizes the volume from cover to cover. There are many things the author has not done : he has not written a second volume of his *Early Life of Charles James Fox* ; he has not put great stress on the constitutional or legal aspects of his period ; he has not painfully traced the evolution of colonial institutions, as divergent from those of Great Britain within the four seas ; he has not penned a painstaking chronicle, checked by dates and checkered with the names of insignificant persons. In so far as he has given proportionate space and no more to each or all of these themes, he has perhaps disappointed his English readers or aroused in specialists a feeling of dissatisfaction. He has even done scant justice to Little England, and probably more than justice to the British Empire ; and he brings but little material from the trickling, intermittent rills known to-day as unpublished sources. But he has done